



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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Article struck a chord

To an amateur musician and military retiree, the laudatory article regarding the Air Force Band of the West struck a chord ("Patriotic, commanding performance," Saturday). Such dedicated men and women deserve praise for the work they do in raising morale and esprit de corps.

Perhaps a story should also be done on the outstanding soldiers who compose the 323 MEDCOM Army Band at Fort Sam Houston. Under the direction of CW3 William Brazier Jr. and Sgt. Maj. Leander Singletary, these soldier/musicians entertain throughout the region.

Even more commendable is that Army Band members are often asked to put down their instruments, pick up a weapon and deploy to Iraq or other dangerous assignments. Clearly, they are soldiers first who also possess the talents to entertain and raise the morale of their comrades.

— Retired Col. Frank J. Berlingis

San Antonio Express News

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AETC News Clips

Laughlin AFB, Texas



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DEL RIO NEWS HERALD **T-38C crash under investigation**

[By Bill Sontag](#)

Published December 15, 2005, p. 1

According to Air Force officials, Maj. Marc A. Montgomery, instructor pilot aboard the T-38C "Talon" trainer jet that crashed Tuesday afternoon, remains in "serious, but stable condition."

Student pilot 2nd Lt. Jonathan Ballard underwent thorough evaluation at Laughlin Air Force Base's 47th Medical Group Tuesday night, and was released.

Lt. Col. George Fenimore, Montgomery's commander at the 96th Flying Training Squadron, said Wednesday night that the pilot's injuries are not life-threatening, and he is expected to return to flight status at Laughlin.

Montgomery has a wife and four children. Fenimore remarked that Montgomery's treatment at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, is both excellent and convenient.

"We're fortunate to be near one of the best facilities of its kind in the world," Fenimore said.

Montgomery and Ballard were on a low-level flight training mission Tuesday when a possible bird strike damaged an engine of the high-performance jet.

"Bird strikes can have catastrophic effects on the airplane, and damage other functional parts beyond the engine," Fenimore explained.

A low-level training sortie typically includes flight at a lowest point averaging 500 feet AGL (above ground level), and at a speed of 360 miles-per-hour, ground speed.

Kathy White, community relations and media chief in Laughlin's Public Affairs Office, said Tuesday that a "minimum safe altitude" for ejection from the T-38C "Talon" is impossible to state.

"There are just too many variables, such as speed, attitude and position of the aircraft to say that altitude is the main factor," White said.

The Tuesday afternoon crash is classified by the Air Force as a "Class A incident." This assignment, according to White, signifies that the crash meets at least one of three criteria: deaths involved, total destruction of the aircraft, or damage in excess of \$1 million.

The crash on land belonging to rancher Brett Trant meets the latter two of those criteria, in contrast with a "Class C incident" at Laughlin last week.

Then, a T-38C sustained a "nosegear up" landing, meaning the front wheel assembly would not lower to a secure landing position.

No injuries were sustained, no ejections occurred, and less than \$200,000 damage was sustained, including the scraped belly of the jet as it was brought to a safe stop on a Laughlin runway.

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Laughlin AFB, Texas



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Recent Class A incident history associated with Laughlin aircraft includes a fatal accident during a night navigation mission on the base in 1983, two deaths from the crash of a T-38B at Spofford Airfield on Jan. 31, 2002, and an Aug. 16, 2003, mishap at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., when a Laughlin jet hydroplaned off the end of a runway there, with no deaths reported.

White said Wednesday that a Safety Investigation Board and an Accident Investigation Board are being assembled to scrutinize all aspects of the Tuesday afternoon crash.

Until the board members all arrive, mostly from other bases, 47th Flying Training Wing Vice Commander Col. Thomas Arko is serving as the Safety Investigation Board interim president.

About 50 Laughlin security forces members, wing staff and board members will protect and pore over the crash site for the duration of the investigation.

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AETC News Clips

Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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LRAFB

463rd: Inside look at war on terror

IN SHORT Operations Group at Little Rock Air Force Base is staying busy with the war on terror while looking forward to its 50th anniversary in 2006.

By SARA GREENE

Leader staff writer

Besides being a schoolhouse for all things related to the C-130 cargo plane, Little Rock Air Force Base houses the 463rd Airlift Group, which transports "beans and bullets" as well as troops, all over the world.

"Airlift is one of the most vital part of

the war on terror," said Col. Scott Lockard, deputy commander of the 463rd, which was established at Little Rock Air Force Base in 1957.

"We're using it to get over some of those areas that are hazardous to military convoys," Lockard said, adding that this year the 463rd helped train the first all-

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Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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Submitted photo

The first all-Iraqi C-130 crew takes off for a mission after several months of training with the 463rd Airlift Group.

► Look

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Iraqi C-130 Hercules crew.

The 463rd has about 1,200 airmen under its command divided up among an aircraft maintenance squadron, maintenance operations squadron and an operations support squadron, as well as two airlift squadrons, the 50th and the 61st.

The 61st Airlift Squadron flies 12 of the older C-130E aircraft and the 50th Airlift Squadron flies 14 of the C-130H3 aircraft.

Currently about 20 percent of the 463rd is constantly leaving or arriving on rotating deployments that typically last 180 days.



Col. Lockard

"They're ours in our hearts, but while they're in the theater (of war) they belong to the commander over there. As a commander, you have to trust them to take care of your troops," Lockard said.

"It's tough on a commander to not have that day-to-day involvement with your airmen."

"The personnel are performing magnificently across the



Submitted photo

A 463rd Airlift Group crew demonstrates the unloading of an Army Stryker armored vehicle from the rear of a C-130 during a military exercise this year.

board in the AOR (Area of Responsibility). The personnel are coming back feeling fulfilled because they understand the importance of what they're doing over there. They're fired up when they get back," Lockard said.

Currently, there are five C-130s from the 463rd in Southeast Asia which includes Iraq and Afghanistan.

Like personnel, the aircraft are rotated back to Little Rock Air Force Base regularly.

"We fly the aircraft hard and we land in austere conditions. It's

hard on the tires and brakes," Lockard said. "We bring them back for the maintenance we can't perform in the desert."

Originally stationed at Ardmore Air Force Base in Oklahoma as the 463rd Troop Carrier Wing, the Wing received the first C-130A from Lockheed Aircraft Corporation on Dec. 9, 1956.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first C-130, Lockard said the 463rd is planning a variety of events to make 2006 "The Year of the Herk," referring to the Hercules.

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AETC News Clips

Sheppard AFB, Texas



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Garage doors get mixed signals

Local companies ready pre-emptive strike for military's radio system

By Michael Hines/Times Record News
December 16, 2005, Page 1B

Uncle Sam wants more than just you. He wants your garage door opener.

The growing need for bandwidth has the government giving the radio frequencies used by garage door openers more attention. Now garage door opener manufacturers are scrambling to put complaints at ease.

As many as 10,000 complaints about malfunctioning devices have rolled into one major door-opener manufacturer since the military deployed a new radio system at various sites across the country. The change has elbowed out garage openers from the radio frequency on which they had squatted for some 20 years.

The move has already stirred woes in places near Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and the Susquehanna defense depot near New Cumberland, Pa., among the first to field the new Land Mobile Radio systems. Reports of balky openers soared in.

But locally, no changes have happened, said 2nd Lt. Ian Phillips, Sheppard Air Force Base spokesman.

"We have had the same system in place since April 2001," he said. "Since that time we have not had any complaints about the system interfering with the local community."

But changes could come.

"There are plans to upgrade the system in 2007," Phillips said.

That's got some local garage door experts preparing a pre-emptive strike of their own.

At Overhead Door Company of Wichita Falls, for instance, plans are to have frequencies used for garage door openers changed from the current 390 megahertz frequency to 315 by the beginning of next year.

"We don't know what kind of impact it's going to have," owner Bill Berger said of the new radio system. "That's the concern: What happens in 2007 and how widespread will it be?"

Jay Bitsche, owner of Door Systems of Wichita Falls, said that the real casualties will be all the dead presidents customers are forced to dish out. People will likely be looking at changing garage door opener remotes and receivers at a cost of \$165 to \$200.

"What it does for me is create business for us," he said. "All I can do is upgrade their (system)."

The radio rollout began in late 2004, according to a Dec. 1 Government Accountability Office report. The garage door opener industry was waging the wavelength war early, Bitsche said.

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Sheppard AFB, Texas



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"We as an industry have lobbied hard against this," he said. "It would have been a lot cheaper for the FCC to change their codes."

The installation and testing of the radio system was part of an \$800 million effort to enhance communications for homeland security and operations reasons. The Pentagon plans to set up the systems at 137 installations in 28 states over the next five years.

Anticipating coast-to-coast disruptions, the door-opener industry forecasts the potential paralysis of untold numbers of the estimated 56 million door openers in use within 50 miles of military facilities nationwide.

"We were very concerned," said Mark Karasek, vice president for engineering of the Chamberlain Group, which manufactures the LiftMaster brand of opening systems.

The crux of the conflict was the decision by the U.S. military to operate radios on the 390-megahertz frequency - the same one used by the door openers for about 20 years.

The frequency is the reserved province of the Pentagon, but the military has largely left it unused until now, tolerating the legal appropriation of the band by the openers because of their very low-power operation.

Now, with the electromagnetic-radio-frequency spectrum flooded with cell-phone communications, computer data and signals, every bit of it is needed, especially by the military.

"As new spectrum-dependent products are developed and deployed, the demand for spectrum, a limited resource, has escalated among both government and private-sector users," the GAO report said.

Faced with such a threat to their livelihoods, the door-opener industry formed the Safe and Secure Access Coalition to try to protect its interests. Manufacturers cobbled together retrofit kits to change the frequencies of openers at a cost to consumers of at least \$50 plus installation.

Some also scrambled to produce new models that operate on other frequencies, and efforts began to build devices that can hop frequencies to find an open one.

Industry personnel met with Department of Defense representatives to try to work out solutions. In one compromise, the military agreed to make public information about where and when the radios will be installed - information it had initially withheld for security reasons. The Pentagon has also joined a publicity campaign to alert users to possible interference with their openers, and to suggest ways to debug them.

"They are trying to be good neighbors," Chamberlain official Karasek said.

In the end, Uncle Sam will be more like Uncle Scrooge, Bitsche said.

"They own the airwaves," he said. "They do what they want to do."

Medical/military reporter Michael Hines can be reached at (940) 720-3456 or by email at [HinesM\(at\)TimesRecordNews.com](mailto:HinesM(at)TimesRecordNews.com). Scripps Howard News Service contributed to this report.

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AETC News Clips

Tyndall AFB, Fla.



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Raptors to rule Tyndall summer

Dozens of stealth fighters from Virginia will test skills at 'Combat Archer' exercise

By Ed Offley News Herald Writer 747-5079 / eoffley@pcnh.com

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE

The fleet of F-22A Raptors operating here will more than double next summer when up to three dozen of the U.S. Air Force's newest fighters temporarily deploy from their home base in Virginia for six weeks of aerial missile training over the Gulf of Mexico, officials said.

Most of the combat-ready Raptors assigned to Langley Air Force Base will deploy to Tyndall to participate in a six-week "Combat Archer" exercise beginning in late June, said Lt. Col. Jim Hecker, commander of the 27th Fighter Squadron at Langley.

The exercise series will provide Raptor pilots with hands-on practice firing AIM-120 AMRAAM and AIM-9L Sidewinder air-to-air missiles against unmanned drone aircraft.

By summer, the Air Force anticipates 35 combat-ready Raptors will be at Langley, up from the 16 currently assigned to the base. This includes 26 fighters assigned to the 27th Fighter Squadron as well as the first nine Raptors assigned to the 94th Fighter Squadron, the second Langley unit earmarked for the F-22A. They will join 23 Raptors assigned at Tyndall's 43rd Fighter Squadron for pilot training, said squadron spokesman Lt. William Powell.

"We will evaluate the entire weapons system — from the man to the machine and its systems — to see how the aircraft performs," said Lt. Col. Raymond O'Mara, who as commander of the Tyndall-based 83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron oversees the "Combat Archer" program.

On average, each of the visiting pilots will have the chance to fire one live missile during the exercise, O'Mara said. In addition, evaluators will study how well the missile systems effectively integrate with the F-22A and its fire-control equipment.

"Combat Archer" is one component of the Air Force's Weapons System Evaluation Program, whose goal is to ensure "our ability to go out with live weapons and execute the mission," O'Mara said. A similar program at Eglin Air Force Base called "Combat Hammer" tests and evaluates the use of air-to-ground weapons, he said.

News of the mass Raptor deployment came as the chief of the Air Force Air Combat Command formally certified the 27th Fighter Squadron for combat operations.

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Tyndall AFB, Fla.



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In a memorandum on Wednesday to Air Force Secretary Michael Wynne, ACC commander Gen. Ronald Keys declared the Raptor program, after two years, has reached its “initial operational capability.” He added, “If we go to war tomorrow, the Raptor will be with us.”

Hecker said the IOC declaration means the Langley-based F-22A unit could deploy for combat operations now if summoned. Barring such an emergency, he said, the squadron will continue with planned training, including mock combat in Nevada and a separate exercise in Alaska in May 2006.

The unusual deployment of the entire squadron to Tyndall stems in part from a long-scheduled runway-replacement project at Langley, which will force the 1st Fighter Wing to temporarily redeploy to other bases, Hecker said.

“We haven’t done a ‘Combat Archer’ yet,” Hecker said. “Our people are real excited.”

The “Combat Archer” program at Tyndall operates unmanned QF-4 and MQM-107D drones as aerial targets. Pilots fire actual missiles at the drones, but their missile warheads are replaced with telemetry instrumentation packages that record the accuracy of the shooting.

“This exercise allows pilots to experience what they would see in combat,” an Air Force background report on the program states. “During standard training flights, pilots go through all the steps to fire a missile except actually firing one, so there’s no way to clearly validate whether the shot would have hit the target. ... (This) is truly a unique opportunity.”

Hecker said that while at Tyndall the squadron also plans to use its aircraft to help the 43rd Fighter Squadron in its training of Raptor pilots. The Langley pilots also will fly mock combat sorties with the F-15C Eagle training unit.

“These are our future pilots in the training pipeline,” said Hecker, who described the professional ties between the two Raptor organizations as especially close.

“The support we have gotten from Tyndall has been outstanding,” Hecker said. “They have excelled in getting those pilots prepared.”

Tyndall officials also cheered the IOC announcement.

“We at Tyndall see this as our report card because it is our mission to train the world’s most capable and lethal F/A-22 air dominance pilots,” said Col. Matthew Molloy, 325th Operations Group commander. “When the chief puts his stamp of approval on the Raptor program ... then we’ve aced the test!”

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Congress so far has approved production of 180 of the stealth fighters, significantly fewer than the 381 that Air Force leaders have sought. The cost of the Raptor now stands at \$338 million apiece, including research-and-engineering costs over the program's 19-year development.

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